SOME REMARKABLE NARRATIVES OF THE Succeſs of the Goſpel, IN AMERICA, In the Beginning of this Century.

WRITTEN BY THE LATE

Rev. JONATHAN EDWARDS, A.M.

Miniſter at Northampton, in New-England, and afterwards Preſident of the College of New-Jerſey;

And by other Miniſters in America.

To which is added,

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CHARACTER OF

THE REV. DAVID BRAINERD,

Miſſionary to the Indians.

He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.
Pſal. cxi. 4.

HUDDERSFIELD:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. BROOK;
SOLD ALSO BY SCATCHERD AND WHITAKER,
LONDON. 1791.

BRITISH MUSEUM

INTRODUCTION.

THE firſt of the following Narratives was firſt publiſhed about 1736, by the late Reverend and learned Jonathan Edwards, then Miniſter of Northampton, in New-England, and afterwards Preſident of the College of New-Jerſey, reſpecting a remarkable Revival of Religion in his own and ſeveral neighbouring Congregations. Mr. Edwards's great Piety and diſtinguiſhed Abilities are ſo well known, both in the Religious and Literary World, that any Com-

mendation of his Character, or additional proof of the truth of his Narrative, will be here equally unneceſſary.

The ſecond Account is taken from a letter, written by the Reverend Samuel Blair, Miniſter at New-London-Derry, in Penſylvania, to Mr. Thomas Prince, of Boſton, and publiſhed by him, in a work entitled the *Chriſtian Hiſtory*.—This deſcribes a like wonderful attention to the truths of Religion, in Mr. Blair's Congregation about 1740, at a time when there was an uncommon and general concern, reſpecting the things of Eternity, through great part of New-England and other parts of North-America.

The third Account is from a Narrative given in Mr. Prince's *Chriſtian*

Chriſtian Hiſtory, by the Reverend Meſſrs. Meſſenger and Haven, of Wrentham, in the Maſſachuſetts, concerning an uncommon Religious Concern in that place, about 1741.

The Character of the Reverend Mr. Brainerd is taken from Mr. Edwards's Sermon at his Funeral. Mr. Brainerd died at Northampton, in New-England, October 9, 1747, in the thirtieth year of his age, having been for ſeveral years a Miſſionary to the Indians on the Back-Settlements; in which work, after much difficulty and diſcouragement, he was atttended with wonderful ſucceſs.

To perſons who have the Honour of God and the true Happineſs of their Fellow-Creatures at heart, it is preſumed that little Apology

will be needful for the preſent republication of theſe Accounts, which ſhew, in ſo ſtriking a light, the bleſſed Effects of Chriſtianity, where it is ſeriouſly and practically received.

It appears from the *Holy Scriptures*, that God has been pleaſed to make uſe of two Ways of recommending true Religion and Virtue to the World; the one is, by Doctrine and Precept; the other is, by Inſtance and Example. And as He has in His providence uſed both theſe methods for the continuance and ſpreading of Religion in the World, by raiſing up Teachers and Perſons, from age to age, by their *Doctrine* and *Example* to bear teſtimony to the truths of His Word; ſo it has alſo pleaſed God, at different Periods, to viſit His Church with

with more extraordinary diſplays of His Mercy and Power in the Converſion of Sinners. This was eminently the Caſe, in the ſucceſs that attended the firſt preaching of the Apoſtles, and, in later times, at the Reformation, which ſpread from Germany into England, and through great part of Europe. Theſe more eſpecial diſpenſations of the Divine Grace it is our duty, as well as advantage, to obſerve and to improve. *They ſhall ſpeak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the ſons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious Majeſty of his kingdom.* Pſal. cxlv. 11, 12.

It is poſſible, however, that to ſome perſons the effects deſcribed in the following Narratives may appear to have proceeded from a Spirit of Enthuſiaſm; and they may

may think that the Concern for Religion was carried to a degree neither deſirable, nor generally practicable. If any on the peruſal of this tract ſhould form ſuch an opinion, I would tenderly beſeech them impartially to compare theſe effects with the fruits that attended the firſt preaching of the goſpel, as deſcribed in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and in their Epiſtles to the different Churches. We ſhall there find, that the Change which paſſed upon theſe firſt Converts did not conſiſt merely in their being turned from the Worſhip of Idols, to a Profeſſion of the Name of Chriſt. Their Chriſtianity was not placed only in an Attendance on the inſtitutions of Divine Worſhip, and an external Reformation from groſs and abominable Practices. It produced an inward,

ward, an univerſal and abiding Change, in their views, principles, and affections. Their views of the evil and deſert of *Sin* were ſuch as cauſed them to be *pricked to the heart* for it, (Acts ii. 37.) and to ſorrow for it with that *godly ſorrow which worketh Repentance to Salvation*. 2 Cor. vii. 10. Their *Faith* in the Mercy of God, as offered to them in the Goſpel, was attended with *joy and peace*; (Rom. xv. 13.) *they rejoiced in hope of the Glory of God*; (Rom. v. 2.) yea they *rejoiced in their Saviour with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*. 1 Pet. i. 8. And this faith was evidenced by an entire change and renewal in the ſpirit of their minds, by a real inward Love to God and Holineſs, and by Love, meekneſs, and compaſſion towards men.

And

And are not the concerns of the Soul, and of Eternity, as important to *us*, as they were to the people of Jeruſalem, Rome, or Corinth? If Sin be ſtill the ſame dreadful Evil, and Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt be the ſame cauſe of Admiration and Praiſe; if the Joys of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell be ſtill infinite, and unſpeakable, ſhould we not rather be filled with grief and aſtoniſhment, that men in general are ſo careleſs and inſenſible, than look upon any proper concern about theſe things with indifference or contempt? Inſtead of undervaluing or deſpiſing theſe inſtances of the Divine Power and Mercy, let us humble ourſelves before God for our great unfruitfulneſs under the many Privileges given to us, and for our grievings and provocations of that bleſſed Spirit

Spirit, by whoſe influences alone they can be made effectual to our Salvation. Let us earneſtly pray that God would ſo richly pour upon us His Holy Spirit, that all who profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians may be led into the way of Truth, and that it may pleaſe Him to make known His ways upon the Earth, and His ſaving health among all nations.

Many and important are the Leſſons which Chriſtians may derive from the peruſal of Hiſtories of this kind. Should they not be excited hereby more abundantly to praiſe the Lord for His goodneſs, and for His wonderful works to the Children of Men? Should they not be animated to more active labours, as well as to more fervent prayers, for the advancement of this

this kingdom of Chriſt, which ſo far ſurpaſſes, in its excellency and duration, all earthly kingdoms? Let us faithfully improve thoſe Talents and opportunities with which God has intruſted us, and diligently aſſiſt all plans and endeavours for the inſtructions of the poor and ignorant, for the Honour and Worſhip of God in the Family or Neighbourhood where we are placed, for the Support and Succeſs of Miniſters, and whatever may tend to promote the Intereſt of true Religion and Virtue in the World. And let the Conſideration of what God has already done for His Church, and what he has promiſed to do for it, encourage us to look forward in Faith and Hope to that happy period, when Ignorance, Error, and Superſtition ſhall be deſtroyed in the univerſal diffuſion of

Ligh

Light and Truth, and when the whole Earth ſhall be filled with the Knowledge of the Glory of the Lord. O bleſſed ſtate of the Earth, when theſe promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed in their full extent! *Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy land, waſting nor deſtruction within thy borders; but thou ſhalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praiſe. The ſun ſhall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightneſs ſhall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy ſun ſhall no more go down; neither ſhall thy moon withdraw itſelf: for the Lord ſhall be thine everlaſting light, and and the days of thy mourning ſhall be ended. Thy people alſo ſhall be all righteous: they ſhall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my*

planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong nation. I the Lord will haſten it in his time. Iſaiah lx.

9 JU 64

Mr.

Mr. Edwards's Narrative, &c.

JUST after Mr. Stoddard's* death, it ſeemed to be a time of extraordinary dulneſs in religion. Licentiouſneſs for ſome years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town: they were many of them very much addicted to night-walking, and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices, wherein ſome by their example exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together, in conventions of both ſexes, for mirth and jollity; and they would often ſpend the greater part of the night in them, without regard to any order in the families they belonged to: and indeed family-government did too much fail in the town. It

* Mr. Edwards ſucceeded his grandfather, the Rev. Mr. Solomon Stoddard, in the miniſtry at Northampton. Mr. Stoddard was ordained, as paſtor of that church, September 11, 1672, and died February 11, 1728-9; he was eminent for gifts and grace, and was bleſſed with extraordinary ſucceſs in his miniſtry.

was become very cuſtomary with many of our young people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting; which doubtleſs would not have prevailed to ſuch a degree, had it not been that my grandfather, through his great age, (though he retained his powers ſurpriſingly to the laſt) was not ſo able to obſerve them. There had alſo long prevailed in the town a ſpirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided, by which was maintained a jealouſy one of the other, and they were prepared to oppoſe one another in all public affairs. But in two or three years after Mr. Stoddard's death, there began to be a ſenſible amendment of theſe evils; the young people ſhewed more of a diſpoſition to hearken to counſel, and grew obſervably more decent in their attendance on the public worſhip, and there were more that manifeſted a religious concern than there uſed to be.

At the latter end of the year 1733, there appeared a very unuſual flexibleneſs, and yielding to advice, in our young people. It had been too long their manner to make the evening after the Sabbath*, and after our public lecture, to be eſpecially the times of their mirth and company-keeping. But a ſermon was now preached on the Sabbath before the lecture, to ſhew the evil tendency of the practice, and to perſuade to reform it; and it was urged on heads of families, that

* It muſt be noted, that it has never been our manner to obſerve the evening that follows the Sabbath, but that which precedes it, as part of holy time.

that it ſhould be a thing agreed upon among them to govern their families, and keep their children at home, at theſe times; and withal it was more privately moved, that they ſhould meet together the next day in their ſeveral neighbourhoods, to know each other's minds, which was accordingly done, and the motion complied with throughout the town. But parents found little or no occaſion for the exerciſe of government in the caſe: the young people declared themſelves convinced by what they had heard from the pulpit, and were willing of themſelves to comply with the counſel that had been given; and it was immediately, and, I ſuppoſe, almoſt univerſally complied with; and there was a thorough reformation of theſe diſorders thence forward, which has continued ever ſince.

Preſently after this, there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village, belonging to the congregation, called Paſcommuck, where a few families were ſettled, at about three miles diſtance from the main body of the town. At this place, a number of perſons ſeemed to be ſavingly wrought upon. In the April following, anno 1734, there happened a very ſudden and awful death of a young man, in the bloom of his youth; who being violently ſeized with a pleuriſy, and taken immediately very delirious, died in about two days; which (together with what was preached publicly on that occaſion) much affected many young people. This was followed with another death of a young married woman, who had been conſiderably exerciſed in

mind, about the ſalvation of her ſoul, before ſhe was ill, and was in great diſtreſs, in the beginning of her illneſs; but ſeemed to have ſatisfying evidences of God's ſaving mercy to her, before her death; ſo that ſhe died very full of comfort, in a moſt earneſt and moving manner warning, and counſelling others. This ſeemed much to contribute to the ſolemnizing of the ſpirits of many young perſons; and there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds. In the fall of the year, I propoſed it to the young people, that they ſhould agree among themſelves to ſpend the evenings after lectures in ſocial religion, and to that end divide themſelves into ſeveral companies to meet in various parts of the town; which was accordingly done, and thoſe meetings have been ſince continued, and the example imitated by elder people. This was followed with the death of an elderly perſon, which was attended with many unuſual circumſtances, by which many were much moved and affected. About this time, many who looked on themſelves as in a Chriſtleſs condition, ſeemed to be awakened, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we ſhould be given up to Heterodoxy, and corrupt principles; and that then their opportunity for obtaining ſalvation would be paſt; and many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught, ſeemed to have a kind of a trembling fear with their doubts, leſt they ſhould be led into by-paths, to their eternal undoing: and they ſeemed with much concern and engagedneſs of mind, to enquire

quire what was indeed the way in which they must come to be accepted with God. There were then some things said publicly on that occasion, concerning justification by faith alone. Although great fault was found with meddling with the controversy in the pulpit, by such a person, and at that time, and though it was ridiculed by many elsewhere, yet it proved a word spoken in season here; and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable blessing of Heaven to the souls of the people in this town. They received thence a general satisfaction with respect to the main thing in question, which they had been in trembling doubts and concern about; and their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the way of the gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way. And then it was, in the latter part of December, that the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons, who were to all appearance savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner.

Particularly, I was surprised with the relation of a young woman, who had been one of the greatest company-keepers in the whole town: when she came to me, I had never heard that she was become in any wise serious, but by the conversation I then had with her, it appeared to me, that what she gave an account of, was a glorious work of God's infinite power and sovereign grace;

grace; and that God had given her a new heart, truly broken and ſanctified. I could not then doubt of it, and have ſeen much in my acquaintance with her ſince to confirm it. Though the work was glorious, yet I was filled with concern about the effect it might have upon others: I was ready to conclude (though too raſhly) that ſome would be hardened by it, in careleſſneſs and looſeneſs of life; and would take occaſion from it to open their mouths, in reproaches of religion. But the event was the reverſe, to a wonderful degree; God made it, I ſuppoſe, the greateſt occaſion of awakening to others, of any thing that ever came to paſs in the town. I have had abundant apportunity to know the effect it had, by my private converſation with many. The news of it ſeemed to be almoſt like a flaſh of lightning, upon the hearts of young people, all over the town, and upon many others. Thoſe perſons amongſt us, who uſed to be fartheſt from ſerioufneſs, and that I moſt feared would make an ill improvement of it, ſeemed greatly to be awakened with it; many went to talk with her, concerning what ſhe had met with; and what appeared in her ſeemed to be to the ſatisfaction of all that did ſo.

Preſently upon this, a great and earneſt concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became univerſal in all parts of the town, and among perſons of all ages; the noiſe among the dry bones waxed louder and louder; all other talk but about ſpiritual and eternal things, was ſoon thrown by; all the converſation in

in all companies, and upon all occaſions, was upon theſe things only, unleſs ſo much as was neceſſary for people, carrying on their ordinary ſecular buſineſs. Other diſcourſe than of the things of religion, would ſcarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world; it was treated amongſt us as a thing of very little conſequence; they ſeemed to follow their worldly buſineſs, more as a part of their duty, than from any diſpoſition they had to it; the temptation now ſeemed to lie on that hand, to neglect worldly affairs too much, and to ſpend too much time in the immediate exerciſe of religion: which thing was exceedingly miſrepreſented by reports that were ſpread in diſtant parts of the land, as though the people here had wholly thrown by all worldly buſineſs, and betook themſelves entirely to reading and praying, and ſuch like religious exerciſes. But although people did not ordinarily neglect their worldly buſineſs; yet there then was the reverſe of what commonly is: religion was with all ſorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the by. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of Heaven, and every one appeared preſſing into it: the engagedneſs of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid, it appeared in their very countenances. It then was a dreadful thing amongſt us to lie out of Chriſt, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what perſons minds were intent upon was to eſcape for their lives, and to fly from the wrath to come. All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their ſouls; and were wont very often

often to meet together in private houſes for religious purpoſes: and ſuch meetings when appointed were wont greatly to be thronged.

There was ſcarcely a ſingle perſon in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Thoſe that were wont to be the vaineſt and looſeſt, and thoſe that had been moſt diſpoſed to think, and ſpeak ſlightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally ſubject to great awakenings. And the work of converſion was carried on in a moſt aſtoniſhing manner, and increaſed more and more; ſouls did as it were come by flocks to Jeſus Chriſt. From day to day, for many months together, might be ſeen evident inſtances of ſinners brought out of darkneſs into marvellous light, and delivered out of an horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and ſet upon a rock, with a new ſong of praiſe to God in their mouths.

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true ſaints multiplied, ſoon made a glorious alteration in the town; ſo that in the ſpring and ſummer following, in the year 1735, the town ſeemed to be full of the preſence of God: it never was ſo full of love, nor ſo full of joy, and yet ſo full of diſtreſs, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's preſence in almoſt every houſe. It was a time of joy in families on the account of ſalvation's being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and huſbands over their wives, and wives over their huſbands. The go-

ings

ings of God were then ſeen in his ſanctuary; God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable. Our public aſſemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's ſervice, every one earneſtly intent on the public worſhip, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the miniſter as they came from his mouth; the aſſembly in general were from time to time, in tears while the word was preached; ſome weeping with ſorrow and diſtreſs, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the ſouls of their neighbours. Our public praiſes were then greatly enlivened; God was then ſerved in our Pſalmody, in ſome meaſure, in the beauty of holineſs. It has been obſervable, that there has been ſcarce any part of divine worſhip, wherein good men amongſt us have had grace ſo drawn forth, and their hearts ſo lifted up in the ways of God, as in ſinging his praiſes: our congregation excelled all that ever I knew, in the external part of the duty, before. But now they were evidently wont to ſing with unuſual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty pleaſant indeed.

In all companies on other days, on whatever occaſions perſons met together, Chriſt was to be heard of and ſeen in the midſt of them. Our young people, when they met, were wont to ſpend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jeſus Chriſt, the glorioufneſs of the way of ſalvation, the wonderful, free, and ſovereign grace of God, his glorious work in the converſion of a ſoul, the truth and certainty of

the

the great things of God's word, the ſweetneſs of the views of his perfections, &c. And even at weddings, which formerly were merely occaſions of mirth and jollity, there was now no diſcourſe of any thing but the things of religion, and no appearance of any but ſpiritual mirth. Thoſe among us that had been formerly converted, were greatly enlivened and renewed with freſh and extraordinary incomes of the Spirit of God; though ſome much more than others, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt: many that before had laboured under difficulties about their own ſtate, had now their doubts removed by more ſatisfying experience, and more clear diſcoveries of God's love.

When this work firſt appeared, and was ſo extraordinarily carried on amongſt us in the winter, others round about us ſeemed not to know what to make of it; and there were many that ſcoffed at and ridiculed it; and ſome compared what we called converſion, to certain diſtempers. But it was very obſervable of many, that occaſionally came amongſt us from abroad, with diſregardful hearts, that what they ſaw here cured them of ſuch a temper of mind: ſtrangers were generally ſurprized to find things ſo much beyond what they had heard, and were wont to tell others, that the ſtate of the town could not be conceived of by thoſe that had not ſeen it. The notice that was taken of it by the people that came to town on occaſion of the court that ſat here in the beginning of March, was very obſervable. And thoſe that came from the neighbourhood to our publi

public lectures, were for the moſt part remarkably affected. Many that came to town, on one occaſion or other, had their conſciences ſmitten and awakened, and went home with wounded hearts, and with thoſe impreſſions that never wore off 'till they had hopefully a ſaving iſſue; and thoſe that before had ſerious thoughts, had their awakenings and convictions greatly increaſed. And there were many inſtances of perſons that came from abroad on viſits, or on buſineſs, that had not been long here before, to all appearance, they were ſavingly wrought upon, and partook of that ſhower of divine bleſſing that God rained down here, and went home rejoicing; 'till at length the ſame work began evidently to appear and prevail in ſeveral other towns in the county.

In the month of March, the people in South-Hadley began to be ſeized with deep concern about the things of religion; which very ſoon became univerſal: and the work of God has been very wonderful there; not much, if any thing, ſhort of what it has been here, in proportion to the bigneſs of the place. About the ſame time, it began to break forth in the weſt part of Suffield, (where it has alſo been very great) and it ſoon ſpread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland, and ſoon overſpread the town; and I believe it was, for a ſeaſon, not leſs remarkable than it was here. About the ſame time it began to appear in a part of Deerfield, called Green-River; and afterwards filled the town, and there has been a glorious work there. It began alſo to be manifeſt, in the ſouth part of

Hatfield, in a place called the Hill, and after that the whole town, in the ſecond week in April, ſeemed to be ſeized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of religion; and the work of God has been great there. There has been alſo a very general awakening at Weſt-Springfield and Long-Meadow. And in Enfield, there was for a time no ſmall concern amongſt ſome that before had been very looſe perſons. About the ſame time that this appeared at Enfield, Mr. Bull of Weſtfield informed me, that there had been a great alteration there, and that more had been done in one week there than in ſeven years before. Something of this work likewiſe appeared in the firſt precinct in Springfield, principally in the North and South extremes of the pariſh. And in Hadley old town, there gradually appeared ſo much of a work of God on ſouls, as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a ſhort time there was alſo a very great and general concern, of a like nature, at Northfield. And wherever this concern appeared, it ſeemed not to be in vain; but in every place God brought ſaving bleſſings with him, and his word attended with his Spirit (as we have all reaſon to think) returned not void. It might well be ſaid at that time in all parts of the county, "Who are theſe that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?" As what other towns heard of and found in this, was a great means of awakening them ſo our hearing of ſuch a ſwift and extraordinary propagation, and extent of this work, did doubtleſs for a time ſerve to uphold the work amongſt us. The continual news kept

kept alive the talk of religion, and did greatly quicken and rejoice the hearts of God's people, and much awakened thoſe that looked on themſelves as ſtill left behind, and made them the more earneſt that they alſo might ſhare in the great bleſſing that others had obtained.

This remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God, which thus extended from one end to the other of this county, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut, have partook in the ſame mercy: as for inſtance, the firſt pariſh in Windſor, under the paſtoral care of Mr. Marſh was thus bleſſed about the ſame time, as we in Northampton, while we had no knowledge of each other's circumſtances: there has been a very great ingathering of ſouls to Chriſt in that place. And ſomething conſiderable of the ſame work began afterwards in Eaſt-Windſor, my honoured father's pariſh, which has, in times paſt, been a place favoured with mercies of this nature above moſt, there having been four or five ſeaſons of the pouring out of the Spirit to the general awakening of the people there ſince my father's ſettlement among them. There was alſo the laſt Spring and Summer a wonderful work of God carried on at Coventry, under the miniſtry of Mr. Meacham: I had an opportunity to converſe with ſome of Coventry people, who gave me a very remarkable account of the ſurprizing change that appeared in the moſt rude and vicious perſons there. The like was alſo very great at the ſame time in a part of Lebanon, called the Crank, where Mr. Wheelock, a young gentle-

man, is lately ſettled: and there has been much of the ſame at Durham, under the miniſtry of Mr. Chauncy; and, to appearance, no ſmall ingathering of ſouls there. And likewiſe amongſt many of the young people in the firſt precinct in Stratford, under the miniſtry of Mr. Gould; where the work was much promoted by the remarkable converſion of a young woman that had been a great company-keeper as it was here. Something of this work appeared in ſeveral other towns in thoſe parts, as I was informed when I was there the laſt Fall. And we have ſince been acquainted with ſomething very remarkable of this nature at another pariſh in Stratford, called Ripton, under the paſtoral care of Mr. Mills. And there was a conſiderable revival of religion laſt Summer at New-Haven old town, as I was once and again informed by Mr. Noyes, the miniſter there, and by others: and, by a letter which I very lately received from Mr. Noyes, and alſo by information we have had otherwiſe, this flouriſhing of religion ſtill continues, and has lately much increaſed: Mr. Noyes writes, that many this Summer have been added to the church, and particularly mentions ſeveral young perſons that belong to the principal families of that town. There has been a degree of the ſame work at a part of Guilford; and very conſiderable at Mansfield, under the miniſtry of Mr. Eleazer Williams; and an unuſual religious concern at Tolland; and ſomething of it at Hebron and Bolton. There was alſo no ſmall effuſion of the Spirit of God in the North pariſh in Preſton, in the eaſtern part of Connecticut, which I was informed

formed of, and ſaw ſomething of it, when I was there laſt Autumn at the houſe, and in the congregation of Mr. Lord, the miniſter there, who, with Mr. Owen of Groton, came up hither in May the laſt year, on purpoſe to ſee the work of God here; and, having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, were careful when they were here to inform and ſatisfy themſelves; and to that end particularly converſed with many of our people; which they declared to be entirely to their ſatisfaction, and that the one half had not been told them, nor could be told them. Mr. Lord told me, that when he got home, he informed his congregation of what he had ſeen, and that they were greatly affected with it, and that it proved the beginning of the ſame work among them, which prevailed till there was a general awakening, and many inſtances of perſons, who ſeemed to be remarkably converted. I alſo have lately heard that there has been ſomething of the ſame work at Woodbury,

This ſeems to have been a very extraordinary diſpenſation of providence: God has in many reſpects gone out of, and much beyond his uſual and ordinary way. The work in this town, and ſome others about us, has been extraordinary on account of the univerſality of it, affecting all ſorts, ſober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wiſe and unwiſe; it reached the moſt conſiderable families and perſons, to all appearance, as much as others. In former ſtirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people have been greatly affected; but old men and little children

have been ſo now. Many of the laſt have, of their own accord, formed themſelves into religious ſocieties, in different parts of the town: a looſe careleſs perſon could ſcarcely find a companion in the whole neighbourhood; and if there was any one that ſeemed to remain ſenſeleſs or unconcerned, it would be ſpoken of as a ſtrange thing.

This diſpenſation has alſo appeared very extraordinary in the number of thoſe on whom we have reaſon to hope it has had a ſaving effect: we have about ſix hundred and twenty communicants, which include almoſt all our adult perſons. The church was very large before; but perſons never thronged into it, as they did in the late extraordinary time: our ſacraments are eight weeks aſunder, and I received into our communion about an hundred before one ſacrament, and fourſcore of them at one time, whoſe appearance, when they preſented themſelves together to make an open explicit profeſſion of Chriſtianity, was very affecting to the congregation: I took in near ſixty before the next ſacrament-day: but it muſt be noted, that it is not the cuſtom here, as it is in many other churches in this country, to make a credible relation of their inward experiences, the ground of admiſſion to the Lord's ſupper. I am far from pretending to be able to determine how many have lately been the ſubjects of ſuch mercy; but if I may be allowed to declare any thing that appears to me probable in a thing of this nature, I hope that more than three hundred ſouls were ſavingly brought home

to

to Chriſt, in this town, in the ſpace of half a year, (how many more I don't gueſs) and about the ſame number of males as females. Thoſe of our young people, that are on other accounts moſt conſiderable, are moſtly, as I hope, truly pious, and leading perſons in ways of religion. Thoſe that were formerly looſer young perſons, are generally, to all appearance, become true lovers of God and Chriſt, and ſpiritual in their diſpoſition. And I hope that by far the greater part of perſons in this town, above ſixteen years of age, are ſuch as have the ſaving knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt; and ſo by what I heard I ſuppoſe it is in ſome other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley.

This has alſo appeared to be a very extraordinary diſpenſation, in that the Spirit of God has ſo much extended not only his awakening, but regenerating influences, both to elderly perſons, and alſo thoſe that are very young. It has been a thing heretofore rarely to be heard of, that any were converted paſt middle age. But now we have the ſame ground to think, that many ſuch have in this time been changed, as that others have been ſo in more early years. I ſuppoſe there were upwards of fifty perſon in this town above forty years of age, and more than twenty of them above fifty, and about ten of them above ſixty, and two of them above ſeventy years of age.

It has heretofore been looked on as a ſtrange thing, when any have ſeemed to be ſavingly wrought

wrought upon, and remarkably changed in their childhood: but now, I ſuppoſe, near thirty were, to appearance, ſo wrought upon between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one of about four years of age; and becauſe I ſuppoſe this laſt will be moſt difficultly believed, I will hereafter give a particular account of it. The influences of God's Spirit have alſo been very remarkable on children in ſome other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley, and the Weſt part of Suffield. There are ſeveral families in this town that are hopefully pious; yea, there are ſeveral numerous families, in which I think, we have reaſon to hope that all the children are truly godly, and moſt of them lately become ſo: and there are very few houſes in the whole town, into which ſalvation has not lately come, in one or more inſtances. There are ſeveral Negroes, that from what was ſeen in them then, and what is diſcernible in them ſince, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable ſeaſon.

God has alſo ſeemed to have gone out of his uſual way, in the quickneſs of his work, and the ſwift progreſs his Spirit has made in his operations on the hearts of many: 'tis wonderful that perſons ſhould be ſo ſuddenly, and yet ſo greatly changed: many have been taken from a looſe and careleſs way of living, and ſeized with ſtrong convictions of their guilt and miſery, and in a very little time old things have paſſed away, and all things have become new with them. God's work has alſo appeared very extraordinary, in the

the degrees of the influences of his Spirit, both in the degree of ſaving light, and love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has alſo been very extraordinary in the extent of it, and its being ſo ſwiftly propagated from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town, tho' in ſome of them it was very remarkable, yet it reached no further than this town, the neighbouring towns all around continued unmoved.

The work of God's Spirit ſeemed to be at its greateſt height in this town, in the former part of the Spring, in March and April; at which time God's work, in the converſion of ſouls, was carried on amongſt us in ſo wonderful a manner, that ſo far as I, by looking back, can judge from the particular acquaintance I have had with ſouls in this work, it appears to me probable, to have been at the rate, at leaſt, of four perſons in a day, or about thirty in a week, take one with another, for five or ſix weeks together: when God in ſo remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two, as at ordinary times, with all endeavours that men can uſe, and with ſuch a bleſſing as we commonly have, is done in a year.

This account of Mr. Edwards's was atteſted by ſix of the neighbouring miniſters.

A NARRA-

A NARRATIVE

OF THE

REVIVAL of RELIGION,

AT

New-London-Derry, in Penſylvania.

[From a Letter from Mr. Samuel Blair, Miniſter at New-London-Derry, to Mr. Prince, Miniſter at Boſton, Auguſt 6th, 1744.]

Rev. Sir,

THAT it may the more clearly appear that the Lord has indeed carried on a work of true religion among us of late years, I conceive it will be uſeful to give a brief general view of the ſtate of religion in theſe parts before this remarkable ſeaſon. I doubt not then but there were ſome ſincerely religious people up and down; and there were, I believe, a conſiderable number in the ſeveral congregations, pretty exact according to their education, in the obſervance of the external forms of religion, not only as to attendance upon public ordinances on the Sab-

baths,

baths, but alſo as to the practice of family-worſhip, and perhaps ſecret prayer too: but with theſe things the moſt part ſeemed, to all appearance, to reſt contented, and to ſatisfy their conſciences juſt with a dead formality in religion. If they performed theſe duties pretty punctually in their ſeaſons, and as they thought with a good meaning, out of conſcience, and not juſt to obtain a name for religion among men, then they were ready to conclude that they were truly and ſincerely religious. A very lamentable ignorance of the main eſſentials of true practical religion, and the doctrines relating thereunto, very generally prevailed. The nature or neceſſity of the new-birth was but little known or thought of. The neceſſity of a conviction of ſin and miſery, by the Holy Spirit opening and applying the law to the conſcience, in order to a ſaving cloſure with Chriſt, was hardly known at all to the moſt. It was thought that if there was any need of a heart-diſtreſſing ſight of the ſoul's danger, and fear of Divine wrath, it was only needful for the groſſer ſort of ſinners; and for any others to be deeply exerciſed this way, (as there might ſometimes be before ſome rare inſtances obſervable) this was generally looked upon to be a great evil and temptation that had befallen thoſe perſons. The common names for ſuch ſoul-concern were, melancholy, trouble of mind, or deſpair. Theſe terms were in common, ſo far as I have been acquainted, indifferently uſed as ſynonimous; and trouble of mind was looked upon as a great evil, which all perſons, that made any ſober profeſſion and practice of religion, ought carefully to avoid.

There

There was ſcarcely any ſuſpicion at all, in general, of any danger of depending upon ſelf-righteouſneſs, and not upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone for ſalvation. The neceſſity of being firſt in Chriſt by a vital union, and in a juſtified ſtate, before our religious ſervices can be well-pleaſing and acceptable to God, was very little underſtood or thought of; but the common notion ſeemed to be, that if people were aiming to be in the way of duty as well as they could, there was no reaſon to be much afraid.

According to theſe principles, and this ignorance of ſome of the moſt ſoul-concerning truths of the goſpel, people were very generally thro' the land careleſs at heart, and ſtupidly indifferent about the great concerns of eternity. There was very little appearance of any hearty engagedneſs in religion; and indeed the wiſe, for the moſt part, were in a great degree aſleep with the fooliſh. It was ſad to ſee with what a careleſs behaviour the public ordinances were attended, and how people were given to unſuitable worldly diſcourſe on the Lord's-day. In public companies, a vain and frothy lightneſs was apparent in the deportment of many profeſſors.

Thus religion lay as it were a-dying, in this part of the viſible church: and it was in the Spring, in the year 1740, when the God of ſalvation was pleaſed to viſit us with the bleſſed effuſions of his Holy Spirit in an eminent manner. The firſt very open and public appearance of this gracious viſitation in theſe parts, was in the congregation

gregation which God has committed to my charge. This congregation has not been erected above fourteen or fifteen years from this time: the place is a new ſettlement, generally ſettled with people from Ireland, (as all our congregations in Penſylvania, except two or three, chiefly are made up of people from that kingdom.) I am the firſt miniſter they ever had ſettled in the place; having been regularly liberated from my former charge in Eaſt-Jerſey, above an hundred miles north-eaſtward from hence, (the rev. preſbytery of New-Brunſwick, of which I had the comfort of being a member, judging it to be my duty, for ſundry reaſons, to remove from thence.) At the earneſt invitation of the people here, I came to them in the beginning of November, 1739, accepted of a call from them that Winter, and was formally inſtalled and ſettled among them as their miniſter in April following. There were ſome hopefully pious people here at my firſt coming, which was a great encouragement and comfort to me.

I had ſome view and ſenſe of the deplorable condition of the land in general; and accordingly the ſcope of my preaching through that firſt Winter after I came here, was mainly calculated for perſons in a natural unregenerate ſtate. I endeavoured, as the Lord enabled me, to open and prove from his word, the truths which I judged moſt neceſſary for ſuch as were in that ſtate to know and believe, in order to their conviction and converſion. I endeavoured to deal ſearchingly and ſolemnly with them: and through

the bleſſing of God, I had knowledge of four or five brought under deep convictions that Winter. In the beginning of March I took a journey into Eaſt-Jerſey; and was abroad for two or three Sabbaths: a neighbouring miniſter, who ſeemed to be earneſt for the awakening and converſion of ſecure ſinners, and whom I had obtained to preach a Sabbath to my people in my abſence, preached to them, I think, on the firſt Sabbath after I left home: his ſubject was the dangerous and awful caſe of ſuch as continue unregenerate and unfruitful under the means of grace. The text was Luke xiii. 7. "Then ſaid he to the dreſſer of his Vineyard; behold, theſe three years I come ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground?" Under that ſermon there was a viſible appearance of much concern among the hearers. After I had come home, there came a young man to my houſe under deep trouble about the ſtate of his ſoul, whom I had looked upon as a light ſort of a youth: he told me that he was not any thing concerned about himſelf in the time of hearing the above-mentioned ſermon, nor afterwards, till the next day that he went to his labour, which was grubbing in order to clear ſome new ground: the firſt grub he ſet about was a pretty large one with a high top, and when he had cut the roots, as it fell down, theſe words came inſtantly to his remembrance, and as a ſpear to his heart, "Cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground?" ſo, thought he, muſt I be cut down by the juſtice of God for the burning of hell, unleſs I get into another ſtate than I now am in. He thus came into

into very great and abiding diſtreſs, which, to all appearance, has had a happy iſſue; his converſation being to this day as becomes the goſpel of Chriſt.

The news of this very public appearance of deep ſoul-concern among my people met me an hundred miles from home: I was very joyful to hear of it, in hopes that God was about to carry on an extenſive work of converting grace amongſt them. And the firſt ſermon I preached after my return to them, was from Matth. vi. 33. "Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs." After explaining the parts of the text, when, in the improvement, I came to preſs the injunction in the text upon the unconverted and ungodly, and offered this as one reaſon among others, why they ſhould now henceforth firſt of all ſeek the kingdom and righteouſneſs of God, viz that they had neglected too long to do ſo already: this conſideration ſeemed to come and cut like a ſword upon ſeveral in the congregation; ſo that while I was ſpeaking upon it, they could no longer contain, but burſt out in the moſt bitter mourning.

The number of the awakened increaſed very faſt: frequently under ſermons there were ſome newly convicted, and brought into deep diſtreſs of ſoul about their periſhing eſtate. Our Sabbath aſſemblies ſoon became vaſtly large: many people from almoſt all parts around inclining very much to come where there was ſuch appearance of the divine power and preſence. I think there

was ſcarcely a ſermon or lecture preached here through that whole Summer, but there were manifeſt evidences of impreſſions on the hearers; and many times the impreſſions were very great and general. There were likewiſe many up and down the land brought under deep diſtreſſing convictions that Summer, who had lived very looſe lives, regardleſs of the very externals of religion. In this congregation I believe there were very few that were not ſtirred up to ſome ſolemn thoughtfulneſs and concern more than uſual about their ſouls. The general carriage and behaviour of people was ſoon very viſibly altered. Thoſe awakened were much given to reading in the holy Scriptures and other good books. Excellent books that had lain by much neglected, were then much peruſed, and lent from one to another: and it was a peculiar ſatisfaction to people to find how exactly the doctrines they heard daily preached, harmonized with the doctrines maintained and taught by great and godly men in other parts and former times. The ſubjects of diſcourſe almoſt always when any of them were together, were the matters of religion and great concerns of their ſouls. All unſuitable, worldly, vain diſcourſe on the Lord's-day ſeemed to be laid aſide among them: indeed for any thing that appeared, there ſeemed almoſt an univerſal reformation in this reſpect in our public aſſemblies on the Lord's-day.

There was an earneſt deſire in people after opportunities for public worſhip and hearing the word,

word. I appointed in the Spring to preach every Friday through the Summer when I was at home, and thoſe meetings were well attended; and at ſeveral of them the power of the Lord was remarkably with us. The main ſcope of my preaching thro' that Summer was, laying open the deplorable ſtate of man by nature ſince the fall, our ruined caſe by the breach of the firſt covenant, and the awful condition of ſuch as were not in Chriſt, giving the marks and characters of ſuch as were in that condition: and moreover, laying open the way of recovery in the new covenant through a Mediator, with the nature and neceſſity of faith in Chriſt the Mediator, &c. I laboured much on the laſt mentioned heads; that the people might have right apprehenſions of the goſpel-method of life and ſalvation. I treated much on the way of ſinners cloſing with Chriſt by faith, and obtaining a right peace to an awakened wounded conſcience: ſhewing that perſons were not to take peace to themſelves on account of their repentings, ſorrows, prayers, and reformations; nor to make theſe things the grounds of their adventuring themſelves upon Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and of their expectations of life by him: and that neither were they to obtain or ſeek peace in extraordinary ways, by viſions, dreams, or immediate inſpirations: but, by an underſtanding view, and believing perſuaſion of the way of life, as revealed in the goſpel, thro' the obedience and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt; with a view of the ſuitableneſs and ſufficiency of that mediatory righteouſneſs of Chriſt for the juſtifi-

cation of law-condemned ſinners; and thereupon, freely accepting him for their Saviour, heartily conſenting to, and being well pleaſed with the way of ſalvation, and venturing their all upon his mediation, from the warrant and encouragement afforded of God thereunto in his word, by his free offer, authoritative command, and ſure promiſe to thoſe that ſo believe.

In ſome time, many of the convinced and diſtreſſed afforded very hopeful ſatisfying evidence that the Lord had brought them to a true cloſure with Jeſus Chriſt; and that their diſtreſſes and fears had been in a great meaſure removed in a right goſpel-way, by believing in the Son of God. Several of them had very remarkable and ſweet deliverances this way. It was very agreeable to hear their accounts how that when they were in the deepeſt perplexity and darkneſs, ſeeking God as poor condemned hell-deſerving ſinners, the ſcene of recovering grace through a Redeemer has been opened to their underſtandings with a ſurprizing beauty and glory, ſo that they were enabled to believe in Chriſt with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. It appeared that moſt generally the holy Spirit improved for this purpoſe, and made uſe of ſome one particular paſſage or other of the holy Scripture that came to their remembrance in their diſtreſs: ſome goſpel-offer or promiſe, or ſome declaration of God directly referring to the recovery and ſalvation of undone ſinners by the new covenant. But with ſome it was otherwiſe: they had not any one particular place of ſcripture more than another in view at the time.

time. Thoſe who met with ſuch a remarkable relief; as their account of it was rational and ſcriptural, ſo, they appeared to have had at the time, the attendants and fruits of a true faith; particularly, humility, love, and an affectionate regard to the will and honour of God: much of their exerciſe was in ſelf-abaſing and ſelf-loathing; and admiring the aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion and grace of God towards ſuch vile and deſpicable creatures, that had been ſo full of enmity and diſaffection to him: they freely and ſweetly with all their hearts choſe the way of his commandments; their enflamed deſire was to live to him for ever according to his will, and to the glory of his name.

There were others that had not had ſuch remarkable relief and comfort, who yet I could not but think were ſavingly renewed, and brought truly to accept of and reſt upon Jeſus Chriſt, though not with ſuch a degree of livelineſs and liberty, ſtrength and joy: and ſome of thoſe continued for a conſiderable time after, for the moſt part, under a very diſtreſſing ſuſpicion and jealouſy of their caſe. I was all along very cautious of expreſſing to people my judgment of the goodneſs of their ſtates, excepting where I had pretty clear evidences from them of their being ſavingly changed; and yet they continued in deep diſtreſs, caſting of all their evidences: ſometimes in ſuch caſes, I have thought it needful to uſe greater freedom that way than ordinary; but otherwiſe, I judged that it could be of little uſe, and might eaſily be hurtful.

But

But there were ſeveral others, who ſeemed to think concerning themſelves that they were under ſome good work, of whom, yet, I could have no reaſonable ground to think that they were under any hopeful work of the Spirit of God. As near as I could judge of their caſe from all my acquaintance and converſation with them, it was much to this purpoſe; they believed there was a good work going on: that people were convinced, and brought into a converted ſtate; and they deſired to be converted too: they ſaw others weeping and fainting, and heard people mourning and lamenting, and they thought if they could be like theſe it would be very hopeful with them; hence, they endeavoured juſt to get themſelves affected by ſermons, and if they could come to weeping, or get their paſſions ſo raiſed as to incline them to vent themſelves by cries, now they hoped they were got under convictions, and were in a very hopeful way; and afterwards, they would ſpeak of their being in trouble, and aim at complaining of themſelves, but ſeemed as if they knew not well how to do it, nor what to ſay againſt themſelves; and then they would be looking and expecting to get ſome texts of ſcripture applied to them for their comfort; and when any ſcripture text which they thought was ſuitable for that purpoſe came to their minds, they were in hopes it was brought to them by the Spirit of God that they might take comfort from it And thus, much in ſuch a way as this, ſome appeared to be pleaſing themſelves juſt with an imaginary converſion of their own making. I endeavoured to correct and guard againſt all ſuch miſtakes ſo far

far as I diſcovered them, in the courſe of my miniſtry; and to open the nature of a true conviction by the Spirit of God, and of a ſaving converſion.

Thus I have given a very brief account of the ſtate and progreſs of religion here through that firſt Summer after the remarkable revival of it among us. Towards the end of that Summer there ſeemed to be a ſtop put to the farther progreſs of the work as to the conviction and awakening of ſinners; and ever ſince there have been very few inſtances of perſons convinced. It remains then, that I ſpeak ſomething of the abiding effects and after-fruits of thoſe awakenings and other religious exerciſes which people were under during the above-mentioned period. Such as were only under ſome ſlight impreſſions and ſuperficial awakenings, ſeem in general to have loſt them all again without any abiding hopeful alteration upon them: they ſeem to have fallen back again into their former careleſſneſs and ſtupidity, and ſome that were under pretty great awakenings, and conſiderably deep convictions of their miſerable ſtate, ſeem alſo to have got peace again to their conſciences, without getting it by a true faith in the Lord Jeſus, affording no ſatisfying evidence of their being ſavingly renewed. But, through the infinite rich grace of God (and bleſſed be his glorious name!) there is a conſiderable number who afford all the evidence that can be reaſonably expected and required for our ſatisfaction in the caſe, of their having been the ſubjects of a thorough ſaving change; (except in ſome ſingular inſtances of behaviour

behaviour, alas for them, which proceed from, and ſhew the ſad remains of original corruption even in the regenerate children of God while in this imperfect ſtate;) their walk is habitually tender and conſcientious, their carriage towards their neighbours juſt and kind, and they appear to have an agreeable peculiar love one for another, and for all in whom appears the image of God. Their diſcourſes of religion, their engagedneſs and diſpoſition of ſoul in the practice of the immediate duties and ordinances of religion, all appear quite otherwiſe than formerly. Indeed, the livelineſs of their affections in the ways of religion is much abated in general, and they are in ſome meaſure humbly ſenſible of this, and grieved for it, and are carefully endeavouring ſtill to live unto God; much grieved with their imperfections and the plagues they find in their own hearts; and frequently they meet with ſome delightful enlivenings of ſoul; and particularly our ſacramental ſolemnities for communicating in the Lord's ſupper have generally been very bleſſed ſeaſons of enlivening and enlargement to the people of God. There is a very evident and great increaſe of Chriſtian knowledge with many of them. We enjoy in this congregation the happineſs of a great degree of harmony and concord; ſcarcely any have appeared with open oppoſition and bitterneſs againſt the work of God among us and elſewhere up and down the land: tho' there are a pretty many ſuch in ſeveral other places through the country: ſome indeed, in this congregation, but very few, have ſeparated

ted from us, and joined with the miniſters who have unhappily oppoſed this bleſſed work.

It would have been a great advantage to this account, had I been careful in time to have written down the experiences of particular perſons; but this I neglected in the proper ſeaſon. However, I have more lately noted down an account of ſome of the experiences of a young woman, but I judge it proper to conceal her name, becauſe ſhe is yet living. I was very careful to be exact in the affair, both in my converſing with her, and writing the account ſhe gave me of herſelf, immediately after. And though I don't pretend to give her very words for the moſt part, yet I am well ſatisfied I don't miſrepreſent what ſhe related. The account then is thus; ſhe was firſt brought to ſome ſolemn thoughtfulneſs and concern about her ſoul's caſe, by ſeeing others ſo much concerned about their ſouls: when ſhe ſaw people in deep diſtreſs about the ſtate of their ſouls, ſhe thought with herſelf, how unconcerned ſhe was about her own. And tho' ſhe thought that ſhe had not been very guilty of great ſins, yet ſhe feared ſhe was too little concerned about her eternal well-being: and then the ſermons ſhe heard made her ſtill uneaſy about her caſe; ſo that ſhe would go home on the Sabbath-evenings pretty much troubled and caſt down; which concern uſed to abide with her for a few days after; but ſtill towards the end of the week ſhe would become pretty eaſy; and then, by hearing the word on the Sabbath-days, her uneaſineſs was always renewed for a few days again. And thus

it

it fared with her, till one day, as ſhe was hearing a ſermon preached from Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" the miniſter in the ſermon ſpoke to this effect, How many of you have been hearing the goſpel for a long time, and yet your hearts remain always hard, without being made better by it; the goſpel is the voice of God, but you have heard it only as the voice of man, and not the voice of God, and ſo have not been benefited by it. Theſe words came with power to her heart. She ſaw that this was her very caſe: and ſhe had an awful ſenſe of the ſin of her miſ-improvement of the goſpel, of her ſtupidity, hardneſs, and unprofitableneſs under hearing of the word of God: ſhe ſaw that ſhe was hereby expoſed to the ſin-puniſhing juſtice of God, and ſo was filled with very great fear and terror: but ſhe ſaid there was no other ſin at that time applied to her conſcience, neither did ſhe ſee herſelf as altogether without Chriſt. This deep concern on the fore mentioned account ſtuck pretty cloſe by her afterwards. There was a ſociety of private Chriſtians to meet in the neighbourhood ſome day after in the ſame week, for reading, prayer, and religious conference: ſhe had not been at a ſociety of that kind before, but ſhe longed very much for the time of their meeting then, that ſhe might go there: and while ſhe was there, ſhe got an awful view of her ſin and corruption, and ſaw that ſhe was without Chriſt and without grace; and her exerciſe and diſtreſs of ſoul was ſuch, that it made her for a while both deaf and blind; but ſhe ſaid ſhe had the ordinary uſe of her

her underſtanding, and begged that Chriſt might not leave her to periſh; for ſhe ſaw ſhe was undone without him. After this ſhe lived in bitterneſs of ſoul: and at another time ſhe had ſuch a view of her ſinfulneſs, of the holineſs and juſtice of God, and the danger ſhe was in of eternal miſery, as filled her with extreme anguiſh; ſo that, had it not been that ſhe was ſupported by an apprehenſion of God's all-ſufficiency, ſhe told me ſhe was perſuaded ſhe ſhould have fallen immediately into deſpair. She continued for ſome weeks in great diſtreſs of ſpirit, ſeeking and pleading for mercy without any comfort, until one Sabbath-evening, in a houſe where ſhe was lodged during the time of a ſacramental ſolemnity, while the family were ſinging the eighty-fourth pſalm, her ſoul conceived ſtrong hopes of reconciliation with God through Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhe had ſuch apprehenſions of the happineſs of the heavenly ſtate, that her heart was filled with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

After this ſhe continued under grievous dejections for about two years, and yet enjoyed conſiderable ſweetneſs and comfort at times; ſhe often came to hear ſermons, with a deſire to get clearly convinced of her being yet in a Chriſtleſs ſtate, and with a formed reſolution to take and apply to herſelf what might be ſaid in the ſermon to the unconverted; but moſt commonly ſhe returned very agreeably diſappointed; ſhe would generally hear ſome mark of grace, ſome evidence of a real Chriſtian laid down, which ſhe could lay claim to, and could not deny; and

thus ſhe was ſupported and comforted from time to time. During that two years ſpace it was ſtill with much fear and perplexity that ſhe adventured to communicate in the Lord's ſupper; but ſhe could not omit it; and ſhe always found ſome refreſhing ſweetneſs by that ordinance.

After ſhe had been ſo long under an almoſt alternate ſucceſſion of troubles and ſupports, the Sun of Righteouſneſs at laſt broke out upon her, to the clear ſatisfaction and unſpeakable raviſhment of her ſoul, at a communion-table. There her mind was let into the glorious myſteries of redemption with great enlargement: while ſhe meditated on the ſufferings of the Lord Jeſus, ſhe thought with herſelf he was not juſt a man who ſuffered ſo for ſinners, but infinitely more than a man, even the moſt high God, the eternal Son equal with the Father: and ſhe ſaw his being God put an infinite luſtre and value upon his ſufferings as man; her heart was filled with a moſt unutterable admiration of his perſon, his merit and his love; ſhe was enabled to believe in him with a ſtrong faith; and when ſhe thought he had ſuffered for her ſins, that ſhe was the very perſon who by her ſins had occaſioned his ſufferings, and brought agony and pain upon him: the conſideration of this filled her with the deepeſt abhorrence of her ſins, and moſt bitter grief for them; ſhe ſaid ſhe could have deſired with all her heart to have melted and diſſolved her body quite away in that very place, in lamentation and mourning over her ſins. After this enjoyment her ſoul was generally delighting in

in God, and ſhe had much of the light of his countenance with her: and O, her great concern ſtill was, how ſhe might live to the Lord, how ſhe might do any thing for him, and give honour to him: the Lord condeſcended to be much with her by his enlivening and comforting preſence, and eſpecially ſacramental ſeaſons were bleſſed and precious ſeaſons to her. At one of thoſe occaſions, ſhe was in a ſweet frame meditating on the blood and water that iſſued from the wound made by the ſpear in her Saviour's ſide: ſhe thought, as water is of a purifying cleanſing nature, ſo there was ſanctifying virtue as well as juſtifying merit in the Lord Jeſus; and that ſhe could no more be without the water, his ſanctifying grace, to cleanſe her very polluted ſoul, than ſhe could be without his blood to do away her guilt: and her heart was much taken up with the beauty and excellency of ſanctification. And a very memorable enjoyment ſhe had at another time, on Monday after a communion Sabbath, when theſe words came to her mind, "The Spirit and the Bride ſay, come, and let him that is a-thirſt come, and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The glory and delight let in upon her ſoul by theſe words was ſo great, that it quite overcame her bodily frame: ſhe ſaid it ſeemed to her that ſhe was almoſt all ſpirit, and that the body was quite laid by; and ſhe was ſometimes in hopes that the union would actually break, and the ſoul get quite away: ſhe ſaw much at that time into the meaning of her Lord in thoſe words, "Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo."

About a time of ſickneſs ſhe had had, concerning which I had enquired of her, ſhe told me, ſhe expected pretty much to die then, and was very joyful at the near proſpect of her change, and ſenſibly grieved to find herſelf recover again; chiefly becauſe that while ſhe lived here ſhe was ſo frail and ſinful, and could do ſo little for the Lord's honour. I was with her in the time of that ſickneſs, and indeed I ſcarcely ever ſaw one appear to be ſo fully and ſweetly ſatisfied under the afflicting hand of God; ſhe manifeſtly appeared to lie under it with a peaceful ſerenity and divine ſweetneſs in her whole ſoul. In a word, her whole deportment in the world beſpeaks much humility and heavenlineſs of ſpirit.

One of our Chriſtian friends, a man about fifty years of age, was removed from us by death in the beginning of May laſt; of whom I can give ſome broken imperfect account, which perhaps may be of ſome uſe. His name was Hanſe Kirkpatrick: he was a man of a pretty good underſtanding, and had been, I believe, a ſober profeſſor for many years, though he had not been very long in America. After the work of religion began ſo powerfully amongſt us, I found in converſation with him, that he believed it to be a good work, but ſeemed very unwilling to give up his good opinion of his own caſe: he told me of ſome concern and trouble he had about his ſoul in his younger years; but yet the caſe looked ſuſpicious that he had got eaſe in a legal way, upon an outward form of religion. Not long

long after this, as he was hearing a ſermon one day, the word was applied with irreſiſtible evidence and power to his heart, ſo that he ſaw himſelf as yet in a periſhing undone caſe; whereupon the diſtreſs and exerciſe of his ſoul was ſo great, that he fell off the ſeat on which he was ſitting, and wept and cried very bitterly. A little after this, he went to Philadelphia, at the time of the meeting of the ſynod, in hopes that perhaps he might meet with ſome benefit to his ſoul, by hearing the miniſters preach there, or by converſing with ſome of them. He told me afterwards, that while he was there, and as he walked the ſtreets, he was unſpeakably diſtreſſed with the view of his miſerable condition; ſo that he could hardly keep his diſtreſs from being publicly diſcerned upon him: and, that he ſeemed ſometimes to be even in a manner afraid that the ſtreets would open and ſwallow up ſuch a wretched creature. He told me of his trouble, and his very ſweet relief out of it, in a moſt moving manner, under a very freſh ſenſe and impreſſion of both; but the particulars of his relief I have quite forgot. He was afterwards choſen and ſet apart for a ruling elder in the congregation. He died of an impoſthume, and gradually waſted away for a long time before his death, and was for about two months entirely confined to his bed. He told me, that for ſome time before he was laid bed-faſt, he had been full of very diſtreſſing fears and jealouſies about his ſoul's ſtate, and was altogether unſatisfied about his intereſt in Chriſt; but that ſoon after he was confined to his bed, the Lord afforded

him his comforting preſence, cleared up his intereſt and removed his fears. After this he continued ſtill clear and peaceful in his ſoul, and ſweetly and wholly reſigned to the Lord's will until death. While he had ſtrength to ſpeak much he was free and forward to diſcourſe of God and divine things. One time when I took leave of him, he burſt out into tears, ſaying, "I had been the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts to him, whom the Lord had ſent to call him out of the broad way of deſtruction." For ſome days before his deceaſe he could ſpeak very little, but to all appearance, with a great deal of ſerenity and ſweetneſs of ſoul he fell aſleep in Jeſus.

There have been very comfortable inſtances of little children amongſt us. Two ſiſters, the one being about ſeven, the other about nine years of age, were hopefully converted that Summer, when religion was ſo much revived here. I diſcourſed with them both very lately, and both from their own account, and the account of their parents, there appears to have been a laſting and thorough change wrought in them. They ſpeak of the concerns of their ſouls with a very becoming gravity, and impreſſion of the things they ſpeak of. The youngeſt was awakened by hearing the word of God preached; ſhe told me ſhe heard in ſermons that except perſons were converted they would ſurely go to hell; and ſhe knew ſhe was not converted: this ſet her to praying with great earneſtneſs, with tears and cries; yet her fears and diſtreſs continued for ſeveral days

days, till one time, as ſhe was praying, her heart ſhe ſaid was drawn out in great love to God; and as ſhe thought of Heaven and being with God, ſhe was filled with ſweetneſs and delight. She ſaid ſhe knew that Chriſt had died for ſinners. She told me ſhe often found ſuch delight and love to God ſince as ſhe did then, and at ſuch times ſhe was very willing to die that ſhe might be with God: but ſhe ſaid ſhe was ſome time afraid yet of going to hell. I aſked her, "If ſhe was troubled at any time when ſhe was not afraid of going to hell?" ſhe ſaid, "Yes:" I aſked her, "What ſhe was troubled for then?" ſhe ſaid, "Becauſe ſhe had done ill to God;" meaning that ſhe had done evil and ſin againſt God. Some time after ſhe firſt found comfort, one night when her father and all the reſt of the family, but her mother and herſelf, were gone to a private ſociety, ſhe ſaid to her mother, "That the people were ſinging and praying where her father was gone," and deſired her mother to do the ſame with her; and after they were gone to bed, ſhe deſired her mother to ſing ſome pſalms which ſhe had by heart, for ſhe ſaid ſhe did not want to go to ſleep.

Her ſiſter was brought into trouble about her ſoul that ſame Summer, by ſickneſs: it continued with her ſome time after her recovery; till one day, coming from public worſhip, as ſhe heard ſome people ſpeaking about Chriſt and Heaven, her heart was inflamed with love to Chriſt. She ſays, that "when ſhe has Chriſt's preſence with her ſhe does not know what to do,

to

to get away and be with God. Their parents told me that for a long time they ſeemed to be almoſt wholly taken up in religion; that no weather through the extremity of Winter, would hinder them from going out daily to ſeek places for ſecret prayer; and if any thing came in the way that they could not get out for prayer, at ſuch times as they thought moſt proper, they would weep and cry. Their parents ſay, they are very obedient children, and ſtrict obſervers of the Sabbath. There are likewiſe other young ones in the place, of whom I know nothing to the contrary, but that they continue hopeful and religious to this day.

Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to give a brief account of the revival of religion among us, in theſe parts; in which I have endeavoured all along, to be conſcientiouſly exact, in relating things according to the naked truth: knowing, that I muſt not ſpeak wickedly even for God; nor talk deceitfully for him. And upon the whole I muſt ſay, it is beyond all diſpute with me, and I think 'tis beyond all reaſonable contradiction, that God has carried on a great and glorious work of his grace amongſt us.

SAMUEL BLAIR.

A NARRATIVE

OF THE

REVIVAL of RELIGION,

AT

Wrentham, in the Maſſachuſetts.

[From Meſſrs. Meſſenger and Haven's Account, dated Auguſt 12th, 1743, in Prince's Chriſtian Hiſtory.]

OUR bleſſed Lord's obſervations in Matth. v. 14, 15. are indeed verified with reſpect to many places in this land and elſewhere in late months and years: "A city that is ſet on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the houſe." A man muſt be a very ſtranger in our Iſrael, who doth not know, that Almighty God hath done ſuch wonders of grace in many of our towns and churches, the fame whereof has been ſpread far; and the news whereof hath been very refreſhing to many pious ſouls, at a diſtance. We ſhould ſurely be unwilling, as we are unable to conceal

ſuch

ſuch glorious things from the churches abroad, and from the world. Nay, we cannot but think it the duty of thoſe who are ſo highly favoured of the Lord, "to publiſh the goodneſs of the Lord with the voice of thankſgiving, and tell of his wonderous works;" by which he is doing honour to his own name, to his Son, and to his Spirit; and greatly promoting the kingdom of Chriſt in the ſouls of men. And ſince the God of all grace hath ſhewn much of the power of his grace in our pariſhes, which neither can, nor ought to be concealed; we think it our duty to give the public an account thereof, with as much diſtinctneſs and brevity as we can.

It is now about fifty years ſince the firſt church of Chriſt was gathered in the town of Wrentham; and ſince the Rev. Mr. Samuel Man was ordained paſtor thereof, whoſe name is ſtill precious to many here, who laboured in this part of Chriſt's vineyard till March 1719, and died the 22d of May following, and left a very mournful family and people, bereaved of their worthy and highly eſteemed Shepherd. But the goodneſs of the great Shepherd was very remarkable, in keeping the ſheep from ſcattering, and in ſpeedily uniting them in the choice of the ſenior ſubſcriber to this account, to be their ſecond paſtor, whom God in his holy providence, and without the deſign of either Mr. Meſſenger or the people, ſent to preach with them on the next Lord's day after the death of their former paſtor. And it afterwards appeared that then the hearts of many of the people were knit to him in ſuch love, as hath

not

not yet been broken; and proved a kind Providence to promote his ſpeedy ſettlement among them, viz. on the 9th of December, 1719. The town has moſtly, from its infancy, been greatly ſmiled upon by divine Providence, and is greatly increaſed; ſo that, on the 23d of December 1737, the general court was pleaſed to divide it into two pariſhes; and, on the 16th of February 1737-8, a ſecond church of Chriſt was gathered in the town. On the 8th of November the junior ſubſcriber to this account was ordained paſtor to the ſaid ſecond church in this town: and an happy correſpondence has hitherto continued, bleſſed be God, between the two pariſhes, churches and paſtors. And this is the more properly taken notice of in this place, as it gives us very frequent opportunities to change pulpits on Sabbaths and lectures, public and private, without prejudice; to converſe with perſons of each other's charge, who are under ſpiritual difficulties, and with one another relating to any difficult and perplexed caſes, that come under either of our obſervation: (a privilege which we pray may be commenſurate with the life of us both.) All which gives us opportunity to be acquainted with the ſtate of religion through the town, and enables us to ſign our names in conjunct teſtimony for the work of Divine Grace that is happily carrying on among us.

The people in this town (ſo far as we can learn, or have had opportunity to obſerve) have generally been externally ſober and honeſt; have kept

kept up a great deal of external religion, eſpecially in their families, and the houſe of God; ſo that the generations that have riſen up from time to time, have generally been inſtructed, from their very early youth, in the firſt principles of our holy religion. But, alas! for a long time paſt, and juſt before the deſcent of theſe late remarkable ſhowers of divine influence, religion was plainly in a languiſhing condition; even ſome externals of it began to be more and more neglected; inſomuch that in the year 1739, there were but two in the whole town admitted to the Lord's table: and vices of various ſorts were much more prevalent than before. And though we have reaſon to think that ſome among us did ſigh and cry for the abominations that were among us, and for indifferency about religion; yet we had awful reaſon to think that the wiſe virgins ſlumbered and ſlept too much with the fooliſh: and, as for us, our hearts were ready to ſink to ſee religion dying, and were ready to mourn in the prophet's language, Iſaiah xlix. 4. "I have laboured in vain, I have ſpent my ſtrength for nought, and in vain."—But behold in the midſt of darkneſs, light aroſe! and the great God was pleaſed to glorify the riches of his boundleſs grace, and viſit the ſouls of many of his people with the powerful influences of his own Spirit; and many that were going their own ſinful ways, we truſt, he hath turned about, and ſet their faces toward Zion. Bleſſed be God for his preventing goodneſs! "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.—The Lord hath done great

great things for us, whereof we are glad. Praiſe ye the Lord!"

The firſt open and public manifeſtation of the Lord's return to us by the power of his grace, was on the 26th of February, 1740-1. It was the day appointed by the government to be kept with ſolemn faſting and prayer throughout this province, to implore the bleſſing of Heaven on our war with Spain, &c. and the day in courſe for the lecture preparatory for the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper in the ſecond church in this town; where, on this double occaſion, the miniſter preached from Zech. xii. 10. There appeared, eſpecially in the afternoon, a very uncommon attentiveneſs unto the word, a wonderful tenderneſs upon the aſſembly: the tokens of a very ſerious concern were viſible on many faces. And though there is ſufficient reaſon to believe that many perſons, before this, were under conſiderable convictions, and abode ſo after the day aboveſaid; yet they kept their concern very much to themſelves, until ſome time in March following, when they could no longer conceal their diſtreſſes; they began to lament their own caſes to one another, and to come frequently to their miniſter under ſoul-trouble. It was agreeably ſurprizing almoſt daily to hear of new inſtances of young perſons (for the work of God's Spirit ſeemed to be chiefly on young people) in great concern, what they ſhould do to be ſaved. The ſame thoughtfulneſs ſeemed to run from houſe to houſe, and from ſoul to ſoul; and their complaints againſt themſelves were very much the ſame.

It was but a little while after this before the ſame Spirit's operations of the ſame kind were equally remarkable in the firſt pariſh and congregation in the town. Particularly on the annual faſt, April 23d, 1741, was a very open and public diſplay of Divine Grace there, very much as mentioned above (in the other congregation) when the miniſter preached from Jer. xxvi. 13. and many were brought under ſtrong convictions, and thenceforward many flocked to their miniſter, eſpecially young people, under ſoul-diſtreſs. The powerful awakenings and convictions on perſons' minds ſpread from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, ſo that by Mid-ſummer there were inſtances in all parts of the town under great concern to know what they ſhould do to be ſaved. Yea, it appeared to us, ſo far as we could obſerve in our reſpective pariſhes, that very few houſes, if any in the town were paſſed by and left without ſome obſervable ſpiritual concern on ſome or other of the family. Our people, in general, became much more attentive in time of public worſhip; their countenances being generally ſolemn, liſtening and tender, ſhewed their extraordinary appetite for the word: and it became a very common thing with us to have a great part of the aſſembly in tears at hearing the word, and eſpecially when they heard the glad tidings of the goſpel, and they were invited to reſt their weary ſouls in Chriſt the Saviour. While we endeavoured with great plainneſs to ſhow unto ſinners their guilt and danger, and to open the awful contents of the law to them, theſe truths would often have their proper effect

effect, in alarming guilty conſciences, and filling the minds of many with great concern for their own ſouls; and then the goſpel-news of a Saviour, and the freeneſs of Divine Grace, would marvellouſly melt a great part of our congregation into tears, and perſuade them, by Divine help, to ſeek the great ſalvation. Nor have we ſeen reaſon, as yet, to think any other than that many of theſe earneſt ſeekers were ſure finders of the Pearl of great price.

Our people grew very deſirous of lectures; that they might have more frequent opportunities for ſpiritual inſtruction, and to join in ſocial worſhip; where we found God often beſtowed his bleſſing. It was not rare to hear them confeſs that they uſed to be weary of the Sabbath; but now they longed to have it return, and that it ſeemed exceeding long to them, if they went from Sabbath to Sabbath without hearing a ſermon. We uſed frequently to gratify their deſires, and preach public or private lectures: though we have ſince ſeen cauſe to lament that we did not preach much oftener at the beginning of this remarkable day of grace, than we did; when the Spirit was moſt evidently with the word, and the work of the Lord, through infinitely wonderful grace, did proſper in our hands. We have ſince, upon more obſervation and experience, been more frequent in our preaching, and ſee no reaſon to repent it, but to bleſs God for ſtrengthening us unto, and ſucceeding us, as we believe he hath, in our more abundant labours.

Before this bleſſed revival of religion in the town, there was very little to be heard, among old or young, of pious diſcourſe, when they were occaſionally together; but it is now about two years ſince there has been an happy reformation in this regard, though it has not yet been prevalent to the degree it ought in the town. It was very pleaſant to ſee and hear the wonderful alteration in this matter among the youth, and ſome children of nine, ten, or twelve years of age. Many of our young people who, whenever they viſited one another or met occaſionally, would ſpend their time in mere vain or uſeleſs diſcourſe, if not worſe, now grew much more deſirous to be together than heretofore; and the Bible, or ſome pious author, muſt ordinarily, at ſuch times, be one of the company, and their converſation would turn chiefly on the ſtate of their ſouls, divine and eternal things: and many of their minds ſeemed much more intent on theſe things than formerly on vanity. Such as would before purpoſely avoid the company and diſcourſe of the godly, would now induſtriouſly ſeek both, and would frequently apply to thoſe, whom they thought more knowing and pious, with ſerious and weighty queſtions about the things of God. Many of our people living three or four miles or more from our places of public worſhip, are neceſſitated to tarry at or near about the meeting-houſes, through the intermiſſion between forenoon and afternoon exerciſes, and there uſed to be little elſe but vain and worldly talk among moſt; but upon the late remarkable divine influence on people's minds, there was a wonderful

ſul change in this regard among (we think) the greateſt part of our people. It became a common thing for them to retire in ſmall companies, to different places for religious conferences, or reading; and ſometimes theſe exerciſes were mixed. And more lately there are ſeveral ſocieties that ſpend part of the intermiſſion in praying, reading, and ſinging together. So that on many accounts the intermiſſion, as well as time of public exerciſes of God's worſhip, is very remarkably holy to the Lord, eſteemed honourable, and a great delight unto the more ſerious among us. And even the time of travel to and from our places of public worſhip has often been ſweetly redeemed for pious diſcourſe between two or three, as they walk in company together.

We are ſatisfied that the general concern upon people's minds which prevailed among us about two years ago, and has not ceaſed, did not ariſe from a diſpoſition to conform to the prevailing cuſtom of the people around us; for this was the firſt town which was ſo remarkably viſited and bleſſed by ſovereign Grace within many miles: and it evidently appeared that many would be under the ſame concern at the ſame time, and would be agreeably ſurprized when they unexpectedly found one another uttering the ſame complaints relating to the ſtate of their own ſouls. It is alſo very evident that this general awakening was not from the influence of travelling miniſters, (though we are ſatisfied God has made uſe of ſome of them for the revival of religion in many places) for there was but one

ſermon preached in the town in ſuch a way, and that to a ſmall auditory, (the warning being very ſhort) and this ſome months before the concern was very general through the town. And here it is very obſervable that there was a ſpirit of conviction on the hearts of many in the Winter before it was externally very evident; when, by the extremity of the Winter and depth of the ſnow, many of our people could not, for many Sabbaths together, attend on the ordinary and ſtated exerciſes of religion; ſo clearly was it the work of God. Nevertheleſs we are glad to own that the news of many converſions in Northampton and other towns in that part of the country ſome years before, and of ſome remarkable ſucceſs of the goſpel in ſome parts of England and America, were means of ſtirring up thoughtfulneſs in many, and encouraged godly perſons to pray with the more confidence for the out-pouring of the Holy Ghoſt alſo on us.

Many came to offer themſelves to join in church-fellowſhip, whom we looked upon ourſelves obliged to examine particularly of their experiences, which gave them reaſon to hope that they could in ſincerity enter into ſolemn covenant with God and his people. Our times for the adminiſtration of the Lord's-ſupper in each church are two months apart: and into the ſecond church in the town (which before conſiſted of ſixty-three communicants, and the pariſh of about ſeventy families) juſt before the ſacrament, May 3d, 1741, were admitted twenty-four more: and between the ſaid 3d of May and the

firſt of July following, were admitted thirty-ſeven more. And conſiderable numbers afterwards from time to time. Into the firſt church in the town (which before conſiſted of ninety-two communicants, and the pariſh of about one hundred and twenty families) were admitted juſt before the ſacrament, June 7th, 1741, twenty more. And then before Auguſt 1ſt, thirty-eight more. And then before October 1ſt, eighteen more. And before the adminiſtration of the Lord's-ſupper there have conſtantly been a conſiderable number admitted ever ſince; (never leſs than five, except twice, and uſually more at a time.) So that now one hundred and thirty-ſix communicants are added to the firſt church, and eighty-nine to the ſecond, ſince April, 1741. Thus greatly are the numbers of our communicants increaſed, and we had opportunity to diſcourſe with each of thoſe admitted into the reſpective churches under our particular watch, of the ſtate of their ſouls, and with many of them ſeveral times; as well as with a conſiderable number who were profeſſors before, and came to us in this remarkable day fuller of concern about their ſouls than uſual: and many that have been brought under ſome convictions, who yet ſtand off from the Lord's table. Many (as each of us can declare relating to ſuch as one or other of us diſcourſed with, and to others that both of us diſcourſed with, and many, of whoſe diſcourſe with their neighbours and acquaintance we had almoſt daily an account of) uſed to complain of their miſpending of time, eſpecially of Sabbath-time, and of their vain wandering hearts in time

of

of religious worſhip; they would lament over their whole life, as having been filled up with ſin, and complain of their own wicked hearts, as leading them to all manner of abominations naturally: they would frequently confeſs it with apparent mourning, that they had ſo long deſpiſed an offered and glorious Saviour; and expreſs their wonder and amazement that God had ſpared them ſo long, that he did not cut them off in the midſt of their wickedneſs; acknowledging that God would be infinitely juſt if he had done it, or if he ſhould ſtill caſt them off for ever; profeſſing their ſenſe that it muſt, and would, be infinitely free grace, if ever they were ſaved; moſt wonderful grace. They would frequently complain of themſelves as greater ſinners than any they knew of: if others had been guilty of more open ſcandalous ſins, yet they hoped that none had ſuch wicked hearts as themſelves. They would often expreſs it, that the ſinful ways, which they uſed to delight moſt in, were now the moſt loathſome and grievous to them; together with very earneſt wiſhes, that they might be kept from all ſin; and would lament, that they could not live without ſin, becauſe of in-dwelling corruption. Many would ſtill expreſs their hope of mercy through Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding all their vileneſs, and that they hoped they were enabled to venture their immortal ſouls on that chief Corner-Stone for ſafety; and that they found a free acquieſcence of ſoul in him; that they deſired nothing ſo much as to ſubmit to him, and to live to his glory.

Some

Some could tell the time when they firſt became ſeriouſly concerned about their ſouls, and what was the ſermon, or the particular paſſage in a ſermon that pricked them to the heart: and ſome would aſſure us, that the news of many others brought under ſoul-concern, and as they thought bringing home to Chriſt, awakened them. It ſeemed as if almoſt all their acquaintance would be ſaved, and themſelves left, which would look very awful to them. Some could give a diſtinct account of the time when from great diſtreſs, their ſouls were enabled to venture upon an infinite Saviour, and (if they deceived not themſelves) found goſpel-reſt in him. Others could give a leſs diſtinct account as to the time of their greateſt diſtreſs, and firſt finding reſt in Chriſt, and yet perhaps equally diſtinct, as to the genuine fruits of the Spirit in their hearts. Some have had, to appearance, much greater degrees of concern and conviction than others, and there has been a great variety as to the degrees of perſons' reſt and joy of ſoul in ſpiritual things. And we have been ever careful to adviſe perſons to obſerve, rather the ſpring, nature and effects both of terrors and joys, than the degrees of them: and that the heart of a ſinner muſt be ſo broken for ſin as to be broken off from ſin; and that every true convert hath ſuch a diſcovery of Chriſt as perſuades the ſoul to chuſe him in all his offices. Some have been much longer under a ſpirit of bondage than others, before they have had any ſatisfying tokens of having received a ſpirit of adoption, whereby they could cry, Abba Father. And

ſome

ſome who were early under convictions of ſin, ſeem ſtill to remain ſo, without giving the diſtinguiſhing marks of a ſaving converſion; or without returning to their former way of living, and frame of mind, now for above two years. But we have awful reaſon to fear that ſome who were under conſiderable awakenings at the beginning of this remarkable day, have unburdened themſelves without finding reſt in Chriſt, by a true faith.

There was about a year ago, ſome decay among us. There ſeemed to be leſs ſolemnity and livelineſs in the countenances and behaviour of the generality of our congregations while in the houſe of God; leſs earneſtneſs after divine inſtructions, both public and perſonal; not ſo much ſavourineſs in private converſation; but a greater eagerneſs after things of the world, than in months before. Some who had ſeemed to be under ſome ſmall awakening, ſeemed to loſe their concern and tenderneſs; though we think that very few, if any ſuch, have returned to ſo great a degree of lewdneſs and vanity as they formerly lived in. Some that appeared to be under great awakenings, as well as ſome that appeared to be hopefully converted, ſeemed to loſe much of the ſenſe of divine things which they had before; and many were ſenſible of this decay. But, bleſſed be God, among all thoſe, that we looked upon in a judgment of charity, to be born from above, there has not one turned an open apoſtate, nor evidently and impenitently ſcandalous in their behaviour: nor have the generality of thoſe who

who have been in any conſiderable meaſure awakened returned, in this time of decay, to their former heedleſs and airy way of living, their frolicks, or vain and merry meetings; nor did they ceaſe from their religious meetings, nor drop any of them, unleſs on occaſion of an extraordinary buſy ſeaſon, and ſhort evenings, and that only in one part of the town where they live remote from one another, and for a ſhort time. Although religion for ſome months about that time did not ſeem to be ſo reviving as before, nor the word to have ſuch power, nor convictions nor converſions to be ſo multiplied; yet neither did the ſtate of religion among us, nor the face of the town appear to be at all the ſame as three years ago. And we have reaſon to think, that all this time converſions were more frequent than for ſome years before 1740. We have reaſon to hope that many prayers were aſcending from among us daily to the throne of grace for a greater plenty of divine and ſaving influences on the people of the town, as well as for the proſperity of Zion in general, and we truſt that many of the people of God were (and are ſtill) praying for theſe things.

And the Lord, the overflowing fountain of grace, hath been pleaſed to viſit us with another plentiful ſhower of grace, and ſo ſtrengthen that which he had wrought for us. It is now above half a year ſince a ſecond revival of religion began to be very obſervable in the town; firſt, in the firſt pariſh in the town, and very ſoon after in the ſecond. As to the ſubſtance of the work,

it

it appears to us to be the ſame as was remarkably among us above two years ago, of which there has never ſince been a ceſſation.

To conclude; we can, upon the whole, freely declare our opinion, That Almighty God hath begun, and now, for more than two years, been carrying on a glorious reformation and revival of pure and undefiled religion among the people of our charge; convincing, hopefully converting, and greatly ſanctifying, quickening and comforting many among us, by a wonderful effuſion of the Divine Spirit, accompanying the word, ordinances, and providences. And that God hath been exceeding good to us in preſerving us from ſuch errors, ſeparations, and diſorders, which we have heard have been in ſome other places. For which, may God have all the glory. Thus we have endeavoured to give a juſt account of the late remarkable revival of religion at Wrentham; with an exact regard to truth, according to our obſervation and remembrance, of perſons, converſations, and events. Now, earneſtly wiſhing the proſperity of Zion; and begging the prayers of God's people for us, and the people under our immediate care, we ſubſcribe

HENRY MESSENGER,
Paſtor of the firſt church in Wrentham.

ELIAS HAVEN,
Paſtor of the ſecond church in Wrentham.

AN

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CHARACTER OF THE REV. DAVID BRAINERD,

Miſſionary to the Indians.

[Extracted from Mr. Edwards's Sermon at his Funeral.]

MR. Brainerd's convictions of ſin, preceding his firſt conſolations in Chriſt, (as appears by a written account he has left of his inward exerciſes and experiences) were exceeding deep and thorough: His trouble and exerciſe of mind, through a ſenſe of guilt and miſery, very great and long-continued, but yet ſound and ſolid; conſiſting in no unſteady, violent, and unaccountable hurries and frights, and ſtrange perturbations of mind; but ariſing from the moſt ſerious conſideration, and proper illuminations of the conſcience to diſcern and conſider the true ſtate of things. And the light let into his mind at converſion, and the influences and exerciſes

 that

that his mind was ſubject to at that time, appear very agreeable to reaſon and the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt; the change very great and remarkable, without any appearance of ſtrong impreſſions on the imagination, ſudden flights and pangs of the affections, and vehement emotions in animal nature; but attended with proper intellectual views of the ſupreme glory of the divine Being, conſiſting in the infinite dignity and beauty of the perfections of his nature, and of the tranſcendent excellency of the way of ſalvation by Chriſt.—This was about eight years ago, when he was about twenty-one years of age.

Thus God ſanctified and made meet for his uſe, that veſſel that he intended to make eminently a veſſel of honour in his houſe, and which he had made of large capacity, having endowed him with very uncommon abilities and gifts of nature. He was a ſingular inſtance of a ready invention, natural eloquence, eaſy flowing expreſſion, ſprightly apprehenſion, quick diſcerning, and very ſtrong memory; and yet of a very penetrating genius, cloſe and clear thought, and piercing judgement. He had an exact taſte: His underſtanding was (if I may ſo expreſs it) of a quick, ſtrong, and diſtinguiſhing ſcent.

His learning was very conſiderable: He had a great taſte for learning; and applied himſelf to his ſtudies in ſo cloſe a manner when he was at college, that he much injured his health; and was obliged on that account for a while to leave the college, throw by his ſtudies, and return home,

home. He was eſteemed one that excelled in learning in that ſociety.

He had an extraordinary knowledge of men, as well as things. Had a great inſight into human nature, and excelled moſt that I ever knew in a communicative faculty: He had a peculiar talent at accommodating himſelf to the capacities, tempers, and circumſtances, of thoſe that he would inſtruct or counſel.

He had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit: I never had opportunity to hear him preach, but have often heard him pray. And I think his manner of addreſſing himſelf to God, and expreſſing himſelf before him, in that duty, almoſt inimitable; ſuch (ſo far as I may judge) as I have very rarely known equalled. He expreſſed himſelf with that exact propriety and pertinency, in ſuch ſignificant, weighty, pungent expreſſions; with that decent appearance of ſincerity, reverence, and ſolemnity, and great diſtance from all affectation, as forgetting the preſence of men, and as being in the immediate preſence of a great and holy God, that I have ſcarcely ever known paralleled. And his manner of preaching, by what I have often heard of it from good judges, was no leſs excellent; being clear and inſtructive, natural, nervous, forceable, and moving, and very ſearching and convincing. He nauſeated an affected noiſineſs, and violent boiſterouſneſs in the pulpit; and yet much diſreliſhed a flat cold delivery, when the ſubject of diſcourſe, and matter delivered, required affection and earneſtneſs.

Not only had he excellent talents for the ſtudy and the pulpit, but alſo for converſation. He was of a ſociable diſpoſition; and was remarkably free, entertaining, and profitable in his ordinary diſcourſe: And had much of a faculty of diſputing, defending truth and confuting error.

As he excelled in his judgment and knowledge of things in general, ſo eſpecially in divinity. He was truly, for one of his ſtanding, an extraordinary divine. But above all, in matters relating to experimental religion. In this, I know I have the concurring opinion of ſome that have had a name for perſons of the beſt judgment. And according to what ability I have to judge of things in this nature, and according to my opportunities which of late have been very great, I never knew his equal, of his age and ſtanding, for clear, accurate notions of the nature and eſſence of true religion, and its diſtinctions from its various falſe appearances; which I ſuppoſe to be owing to theſe three things meeting together in him: the ſtrength of his natural genius; and the great opportunities he had of obſervation of others, in various parts, both white people and Indians; and his own great experience.

His experiences of the holy influences of God's Spirit were not only great at his firſt converſion, but they were ſo, in a continued courſe, from that time forward; as appears by a record, or private journal, he kept of his daily inward exerciſes, from the time of his converſion, until he was diſabled by the failing of his ſtrength, a few days before

before his death. The change which he looked upon as his converſion, was not only a great change of the preſent views, affections, and frame of his mind; but was evidently the beginning of that work of God on his heart, which God carried on, in a very wonderful manner, from that time to his dying day. He greatly abhorred the way of ſuch, as live on their firſt work, as though they had now got through their work, and are thenceforward, by degrees, ſettled in a cold, lifeleſs, negligent, worldly frame; he had an ill opinion of ſuch perſons religion.

His experiences were very diverſe from many things that have lately obtained the reputation, with multitudes, of the very height of Chriſtian experience. About the time that that falſe religion, which ariſes chiefly from impreſſions on the imagination, began firſt to make a very great appearance in the land, he was for a little while deceived with it, ſo as to think highly of it. And though he knew he never had ſuch experiences as others told of, he thought it was becauſe others attainments were beyond his; and ſo coveted them, and ſought after them, but could never obtain them. He told me, that he never had what is called an impulſe, or a ſtrong impreſſion on his imagination in things of religion, in his life. But owned, that during the ſhort time that he thought well of theſe things, he was tinged with that ſpirit of falſe zeal that is wont to attend them. But ſaid that, even in this time, he was not in his element, but as a fiſh out of water. And ſince his convictions of his error in thoſe

reſpects, he has ever had a peculiar abhorrence of that kind of bitter zeal, and thoſe deluſive experiences that have been the principal ſource of it. He deteſted enthuſiaſm in all its forms and operations; and abhorred whatever in opinion or experience ſeemed to verge towards Antinomianiſm. He greatly nauſeated a diſpoſition in perſons to much noiſe and ſhow in religion, and affecting to be abundant in publiſhing and proclaiming their own experiences; though he did not condemn, but approved of Chriſtians ſpeaking of their experiences, on ſome occaſions, and to ſome perſons, with modeſty, diſcretion and reſerve.

As his inward experiences appear to have been of the right kind, and were very remarkable as to their degree, ſo was his outward behaviour and practice agreeable. He in his whole courſe acted as one who had indeed ſold all for Chriſt, and had entirely devoted himſelf to God, and made his glory his higheſt end, and was fully determined to ſpend his whole time and ſtrength in his ſervice. He was lively in religion, in the right way: Lively, not only, nor chiefly, with his tongue, in profeſſing and talking; but lively in the work and buſineſs of religion. He was not one of thoſe which are for contriving ways to ſhun the croſs, and get to heaven with eaſe and ſloth; but was ſuch an inſtance of one living a life of labour and ſelf-denial, and ſpending his ſtrength and ſubſtance in purſuing that great end, the glory of his Redeemer, that perhaps is ſcarcely to be paralleled in this age in theſe parts

of

of the world. Much of this may be perceived by any one who reads his printed Journal; but much more has been learned by long intimate acquaintance with him, and by looking into his Diary ſince his death, that he purpoſely concealed in what he publiſhed.

And as his deſires and labours for the advancement of Chriſt's kingdom were great, ſo was his ſucceſs. God was pleaſed to make him the inſtrument of bringing to paſs the moſt remarkable things among the poor ſavages, in enlightening, awakening, reforming and changing their diſpoſition and manners, and wonderfully transforming them, that perhaps any inſtance can be produced of in theſe latter ages of the world. An account of which has been given the public in his Journals*, drawn up by order of the Honourable Society in Scotland, that employed him: Which I would recommend to the peruſal of all ſuch as take pleaſure in the wonderful works of God's grace, and would read that which will peculiarly tend both to entertain and profit a Chriſtian mind.

No leſs extraordinary than the things already mentioned of him in life, was his conſtant calmneſs,

* The LIFE of Mr. Brainerd, written by the Rev. Mr. Edwards, is publiſhed together with his PUBLIC JOURNALS, deſcribing his remarkable Succeſs amongſt the Indians, and the Sermon preached at his Ordination by the Rev. Mr. Pemberton, in one 8vo. Volume.

neſs, peace, aſſurance and joy in God, during the long time he looked death in the face, without the leaſt hope of recovery; continuing without interruption to the laſt; while his diſtemper very ſenſibly preyed upon his vitals, from day to day, and often brought him to that ſtate, that he looked upon himſelf, and was thought by others, to be dying. The thoughts of approaching death never ſeemed in the leaſt to damp him, but rather to encourage him, and exhilarate his mind. And the nearer death approached, the more deſirous he ſeemed to be of it. He ſaid, not long before his death, that "the conſidera-"tion of the day of death, and the day of "judgement, had a long time been peculiarly "ſweet to him." And at another time, that "he could not but think of the meetneſs there "was in throwing ſuch a rotten carcaſe as his "into the grave: It ſeemed to him to be the "right way of diſpoſing of it." He often uſed the epithet *glorious*, when ſpeaking of the day of death, calltng it *that glorious day*. On a Sabbath-day morning, September 27, feeling an unuſual violent appetite to food, and looking on it as a ſign of approaching death, he ſaid "he "ſhould look on it as a favour, if this might be "his dying day, and that he longed for the "time." He had before expreſſed himſelf deſirous of ſeeing his brother again, whoſe return had been expected from the Jerſeys; but then (ſpeaking of him) he ſaid, "I am willing to go, "and never ſee him again: I care not what I "part with, to be for ever with the Lord." Being aſked, that morning, how he did? he anſwered

ſwered, "I am almoſt in eternity: God knows, "I long to be there. My work is done; I have "done with all my friends: All the world is no-"thing to me." On the evening of the next day, when he thought himſelf dying, and was apprehended to be ſo by others, and he could utter himſelf only by broken whiſpers, he often repeated the word *Eternity*; and ſaid, "I ſhall ſoon, be "with the holy angels."—"He will come; he "will not tarry." He told me one night, as he went to bed, that "he expected to die that night:" And added, "I am not at all afraid, I am willing to go this night, if it be the will of God. Death is what I long for." He ſometimes expreſſed himſelf as "having nothing to do but to die: and being willing to go that minute if it was the will of God." He ſometimes uſed that expreſſion, "O why is his chariot ſo long in coming!"

He ſeemed to have remarkable exerciſes of reſignation to the will of God. He once told me, that "he longed for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit of God, and the glorious times of the church, and hoped they were coming; and ſhould have been willing to have lived to promote religion at that time, if that had been the will of God. But (ſays he) I am willing it ſhould be as it is: I would not have the choice to make myſelf for ten thouſand worlds."

He ſeveral times ſpake of the different kinds of willingneſs to die: And ſpoke of it as an ignoble mean kind of willingneſs to die, to be willing,

to

to get rid of pain, or to go to heaven only to get honour and advancement there. His own longings for death ſeemed to be quite of a different kind, and for nobler ends. When he was firſt taken with ſomething like a diarrhœa, which is looked upon as one of the laſt and moſt fatal ſymptoms in a conſumption, he ſaid, "O now "the glorious time is coming! I have longed "to ſerve God perfectly; and God will gratify "theſe deſires." And at one time and another, in the latter part of his illneſs, he uttered theſe expreſſions. "My heaven is, to pleaſe God, and glorify him, and give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory: That is the heaven I long for; that is my religion; and that is my happineſs; and always was, ever ſince I ſuppoſed I had any true religion: And all thoſe that are of that religion, ſhall meet me in heaven.—I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I ſhall be ſtationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low ſeat there, but to love, and pleaſe, and glorify God. If I had a thouſand ſouls, if they were worth any thing, I would give them all to God: But I have nothing to give, when all is done. It is impoſſible for any rational creature to be happy without acting all for God: God himſelf could not make me happy any other way.—I long to be in heaven, praiſing and glorifying God with the holy angels; all my deſire is to glorify God.—My heart goes out to the burying-place, it ſeems to me a deſireable place: But O to glorify God! That is it! That is above all!—It is a great comfort to me to think that I have done a little

little for God in the world: It is but a very ſmall matter; yet I have done a little; and I lament it that I have not done more for him.—There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good, and finiſhing God's work, doing the work that Chriſt did. I ſee nothing elſe in the world that can yield any ſatisfaction, beſides living to God, pleaſing him, and doing his whole will. My greateſt joy and comfort has been to do ſomething for promoting the intereſt of religion, and the ſouls of particular perſons."

After he came to be in ſo low a ſtate, that he ceaſed to have the leaſt expectation of recovery, his mind was peculiarly carried forth with earneſt concern for the proſperity of the church of God on earth: Which ſeemed very manifeſtly to ariſe from a pure diſintereſted love to Chriſt, and deſire of his glory. But a little before his death, he ſaid to me, as I came into the room, "My "thoughts have been employed on the old dear "theme, the proſperity of God's church on "earth. As I waked out of ſleep (ſaid he) I "was led to cry for the pouring out of God's "Spirit, and the advancement of Chriſt's king-"dom, which the dear Redeemer did and ſuf-"fered ſo much for: It is that eſpecially makes "me long for it."

But a few days before his death, he deſired us to ſing a pſalm that was concerning the proſperity of Zion; which he ſignified that his mind was engaged in the thoughts of, and deſires after, above all things; and at his deſire we ſang a part of the

102 pſalm. And when we had done, though he was then ſo low that he could ſcarcely ſpeak, he ſo exerted himſelf, that he made a prayer very audibly, wherein, beſides praying for thoſe preſent, and for his own congregation, he earneſtly prayed for the reviving and flouriſhing of religion in the world.—His own congregation lay much on his heart. He often ſpake of them; and commonly when he did ſo, it was with extraordinary tenderneſs; ſo that his ſpeech was interrupted and drowned with weeping.

Oh that the things which were ſeen and heard in this extraordinary perſon, his holineſs, heavenlineſs, labour and ſelf-denial in life, his ſo remarkably devoting himſelf and his all, in heart and practice, to the glory of God, and the wonderful frame of mind manifeſted, in ſo ſtedfaſt a manner, under the expectation of death, and the pains and agonies that brought it on, may excite in us all, both miniſters and people, a due ſenſe of the greatneſs of the work we have to do in the world, the excellency and amiableneſs of thorough religion in experience and practice, and the bleſſedneſs of the end of ſuch, whoſe death finiſhes ſuch a life, and the infinite value of their eternal reward, when abſent from the body and preſent with the Lord; and effectually ſtir us up to endeavours that in the way of ſuch an holy life, we may at laſt come to ſo bleſſed an end. *Amen.*

9 JU 64

FINIS.